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Lawyer Briefs

An Intimate Message from Washington

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High lights and low lights of the American Bar Association Convention:

Hottest issue at this week's mammoth legal clambake in Washington (next to the weather) was the Connally amendment to United States adherence to the World Court. This reserved to the United States the right to decide what cases in which it was involved it would allow to go to the bar of world justice.

By a narrow vote of 114 to 107, the ABA's House of Delegates (its only policy-making body) upheld a 1947 policy of opposition to the Connally amendment—but it was a bitter and heated verbal fight.

President Eisenhower made a personal appearance and personal plea to the lawyers to back repeal of the amendment—a position that put him in opposition to his lawyer brother, Edgar Eisenhower, an ABA member.

Three administration officials, Attorney General Rogers, his deputy, and the Solicitor General (all ABA House of Delegates members) helped push the repeal vote through. But the vote was close enough to assure renewed fight within the ABA on this major issue.

At a special session of the Supreme Court some 1,900 lawyers from all parts of the United States were admitted to practice before the land's highest tribunal.

With Vice-President Nixon temporarily hospitalized, the ABA commandeered lawyer Adlai Stevenson to address their annual dinner—or rather one of two dinners scheduled to handle the crowd.

Secretary of State Herter spoke at the other dinner held simultaneously.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren had hardly finished opening the ABA convention in a solemn (and hot, hot, hot)

sylvan-theater ceremony on the Washington Monument grounds, when Senator Harry Byrd (D) of Virginia (in an ABA section meeting) loudly and roundly and forthrightly denounced the United States Supreme Court "for having undermined our system of government at all levels."

Spying isn't the glamorous job of fiction or TV—if it ever was—was the substance of the message a top Central Intelligence Agency official expounded to an ABA audience. And, for the first time, he disclosed how the United States caught Soviet spy Col. Rudolph Ivanovich Abel, who had been operating a military and atomic espionage ring in the heart of Brooklyn.

The break came in Paris, where a Russian drunk—a Soviet agent ordered back to Russia on home leave, and afraid to go—asked asylum in the United States Embassy.

On checking his charges about the Abel spy ring, the CIA and FBI found they were true—but they got their break from a man who at first seemed nothing but a "crack-pot."

Charles Rhyne, former president of the ABA, discussing the U-2 incident, insisted that "an impartial court" would uphold the U-2 flight over the U.S.S.R. as justified and that such a flight was not "an aggressive act within the meaning of the United Nations Charter."

The largest crowd on record to attend a White House garden party—4,336—showed up as ABA guests of the President and First Lady. Only 2,000 were expected, but the President—appearing that morning before the ABA—impulsively urged them all to drop in for the afternoon, which they did.

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